

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Missouri River Aerial Fiber Optic Project-Navigable Water ROW
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2016
Proponent:	Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink
Location:	SW4SW4, Section 20, T16N, R2W
County:	Cascade County
Trust:	Public Land Trust

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink has applied for Navigable Waterway/Utility ROW to install new aerial fiber optic cable over the Missouri River utilizing existing utility infrastructure owned by NorthWestern Energy. The ROW corridor for the crossing would be 20 feet wide. The length of the crossing and the acres encumbered are listed in the table below:

Legal Description & Crossing #	Length in Feet	Acres Encumbered
SW4SW4, Section 20, T16N, R2W (Crossing #1)	429.94 feet	0.20 acres

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Agencies, Groups or Individuals Scoped:	Response:
DNRC, Landowner	Neutral-Landowner (Navigable River)
Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink	Proponent is in favor of the project
Regulatory Agencies-Joint Application to Work in MT Waterways, ie FWP, Conservation Dist, Army Corp. etc.	N/A

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink is addressing other possibly required permits regarding this project through the Joint Application to Work in MT Waterways. DNRC is not aware of any other required permits for this specific project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Action Alternative: To grant Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink a utility easement of approximately __429.94__ feet long and 20ft wide for installation of fiber optic cable over/across the Missouri River to update services in the area.

No Action Alternative: To deny Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink a utility easement of approximately __429.94__ feet long and 20ft wide for installation of fiber optic cable over/across the Missouri River to update services in the area.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain **POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS** following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The proponent is using an existing overhead utility infrastructure owned by another provider to install the new fiber optic line.

Proposed Action Alternative: No long-lasting impacts to fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or any unusual geologic features are anticipated. Mitigations regarding impacted soils may be addressed through other regulatory agencies and their permitting process or other landowners.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the geology or soil characteristics would occur.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Impacts to the water quality, quantity and distribution would be minimal since the impact of installing a new fiber optic line on an existing overhead utility line requires minimal or no disturbance to water resources.

Proposed Action Alternative: No direct or cumulative impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution will occur.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

In general, this area is considered to be of high quality air standards with good ventilation and would not be permanently impacted by the proposal. Temporary disturbances to air quality may occur due to dust created by the installation process.

Proposed Action Alternative: Temporary disturbances may occur during the construction phase. No direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to air quality as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to air quality will occur.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

There are no known rare plants or cover types present. The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists no plant species of concern, potential species of concern, or special status species within T16N R2W.

Proposed Action Alternative: Temporary disturbances to plant communities may occur on adjacent private land. Vegetative communities would not be permanently altered. No impacts to rare plants or cover types are anticipated within the prospective easement corridor.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the vegetation cover, quantity, and/or quality will occur.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

This tract is used by a variety of wildlife, including large ungulates, small to large sized predators, numerous species of small mammals, various raptors, waterfowl, numerous non-game bird species, and fish. The proposed project may temporarily displace these wildlife species.

Proposed Action Alternative: Habitats would be temporarily disturbed during the installation of the fiber optic line. No lasting impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and/or habitats are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats will occur.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists 9 animal *species of concern* (Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Golden Eagle, Evening Grosbeak, Peregrine Falcon, Pinyon Jay, Cassin's Finch, Green-tailed Towhee, Westslope Cutthroat Trout); 0 *potential species of concern*; and 1 *special status species* (Bald Eagle) within this township. The area wildlife would be affected by temporary displacement during installation and maintenance of the fiber optic line. Since the fiber optic line will be installed on already existing overhead utility infrastructure, no new detrimental impacts are anticipated.

Proposed Action Alternative: Habitats would be temporarily disturbed during the installation of the fiber optic line. No lasting impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources will occur.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The Department Archaeologist was consulted in regards to this project.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to areas historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources are anticipated due to the scope and nature of this project.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources will occur.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The landscape consists of developed residential areas, recreational access sites, pastureland, irrigated and dry crop agricultural river bottom used primarily for general residential, river recreation, farming and ranching operations. The fiber optic line would be an addition of approximately 429.4 feet of fiber optic line on an already existing overhead utility crossing the Missouri River. It would have minimal impacts to the area's aesthetics. Noise increases may occur during construction; these impacts would cease as soon as the project is completed.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the aesthetics are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the aesthetics will occur.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The area does not contain limited resources. Nearby activities consist mostly of general residential, river recreation, farming and ranching operations.

Proposed Action Alternative No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources will occur.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects pertinent to this area are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects will occur.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project would create human health and/or safety risks associated with the installation and maintenance of the fiber optic line.

Proposed Action Alternative: Qwest Corporation dba Century Link will identify the risks associated with the installation of the line as an occupational hazard. The risk would only be present during installation and maintenance of the proposed line.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to human health and/or safety risks will occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Temporary disturbances in regards to these activities may occur during the installation of the utility.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposed project would improve the Century Link services in the project area.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to industrial, commercial, agricultural activities would occur.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project would be completed in a relatively short time frame and it would not create permanent jobs.

Proposed Action Alternative: No lasting impacts to quantity and distribution of employment are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment will occur.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Proposed Action Alternative: The project would not have any measurable effects to local or state tax revenues.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenues will occur.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposal would not have any impacts on traffic or government services.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to traffic, road uses, or government services will occur.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals are anticipated occur as the construction is in remote, rural areas.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals will occur.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Floater and fisherman utilize the Missouri River for recreational purposes. Extensive access for the public exists within the project area. Temporary delays or small closures may occur. It is anticipated recreationists will be able to utilize this stretch of the Missouri River while the installation is taking place.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposed action is not expected to greatly impact general recreational and wilderness activities on these state tracts.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities will occur.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposal does not include any changes to additional housing, developments or population.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the density and/or distribution of population and housing will occur.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities will occur.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Proposed Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity will occur.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Proposed Action Alternative: The proposed project would improve Qwest Corporation dba Century Link services in the project area. Compensation to the trust beneficiary would involve the following values: the total length of the fiber optic line crossing state land in the Missouri Riverbed is 429.94 feet long, 20 feet wide, and contains 0.20 acres more or less. DNRC valuation of the 0.20 acres is \$1000/acre for a total of \$200.00 for a ROW across a navigable waterway.

No Action Alternative: No impacts to the social and economic circumstances will occur.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne	Date: September 16, 2016
	Title: Helena Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Proposed Alternative – Approve the project as proposed

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

This project should have no significant, detrimental impacts or cumulative effects regarding the project area.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EIS

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More Detailed EA

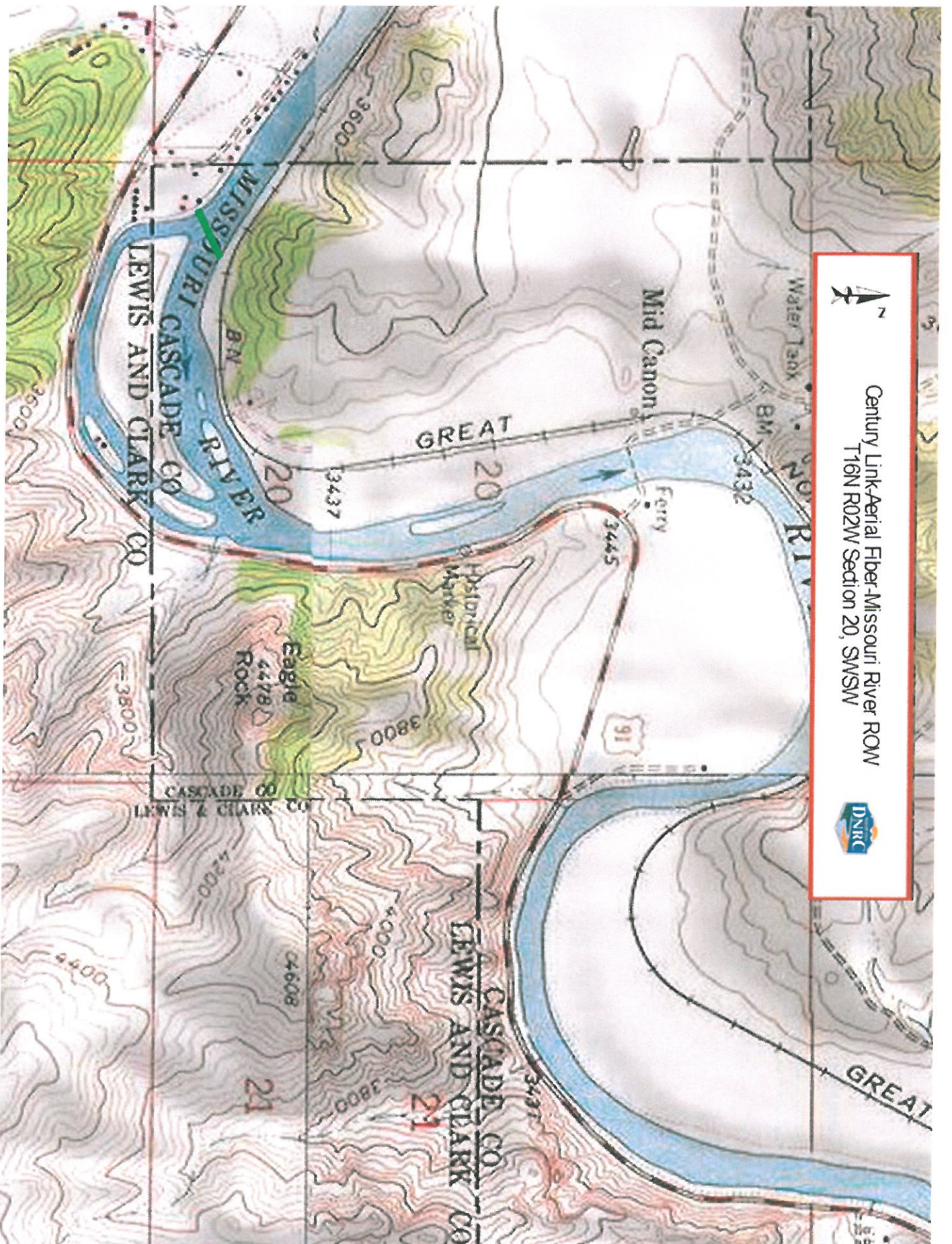
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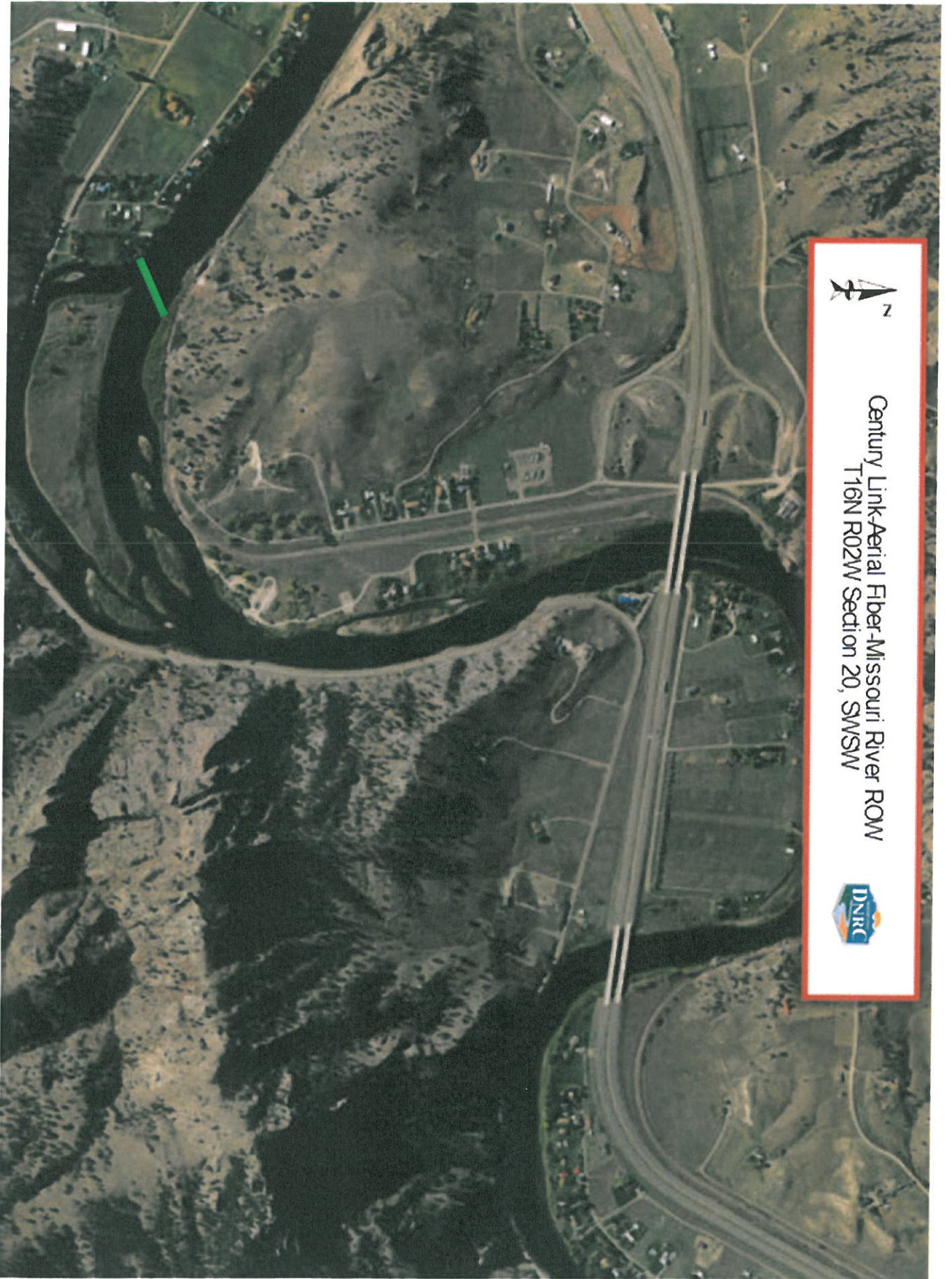
No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: MARTIN BALKAS
	Title: TRUST LAND PROGRAM MANAGER
Signature: 	Date: 9-16-16



Century Link-Aerial Fiber-Missouri River ROW
T16N R02W Section 20, SWSW





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